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ESTANCIA, N. M.

THE ESTANCIA NEWS.

Improving the Spud Crop.

A. G. CRAIG.

Little attention is usually given nowadays by farmers to the selection of their seed tubers. Many plant potatoes are really of no value except for stock feed. Yet the potato crop will give as great or greater return for care in selecting seed than any other crop. A great variation in the tubers from hills growing near each other may often be noticed at digging time. One hill may have a large number of tubers of uniform size and shape and a few small ones. If the large tubers are selected from the bin for planting they are as apt to have come from poor hills as from good ones. Hence the plant and not the single tuber is the proper unit of selection and the selection must be made in the field where the whole plant can be examined. When the potatoes are dug by hand this is easily done. Two rows are usually thrown together in digging, and where a good hill is found the tubers may be thrown in the opposite direction to be picked up separately for seed.

When machine diggers are used, seed selection can be practiced with but little extra trouble, according to the following plan: First year, before digging time, examine the plants of the general field crop, giving special attention to the vigor, freedom from disease and habits of growth of the plants, etc., and mark by stakes such plants as show a distinct superiority over the general crop. Before starting the digger each marked hill should be dug separately by hand and the tubers from those hills which prove of sufficient excellence should be saved for seed. The second year plant this selected seed alongside the regular crop and give it the same care as the remainder of the field. Dig this part of the crop separately by hand in the fall and select the best hills from it for the special seed plot of the next year, using the remainder for the main crop for general planting.

The third and following years harvest the crop from the specially selected seed by hand, saving the best hills for the next years special plot and

using the remainder for the main crop planting. Other things being equal, the closer the selection of the hills is performed each year, the better will be the results in subsequent crops. If the farmer is an expert at picking out the best hills before they are dug, the small seed plot may be harvested with a digger each year after the best hills have been taken out by hand, thereby reducing the necessary hand digging to the minimum.

Consistent seed selection will pay larger profits than any other feature of the potato growing industry. There are often different strains of a single variety of potatoes which differ from each other in their characteristics—especially yield—more than do the different varieties. Many varieties possess more characteristics in common than do two different strains of the same variety. Hence, the importance of a well bred strain in any given variety for seed purposes is evident. Select only such varieties for late potatoes as will mature early enough to give ample time for digging in the fall under normal conditions.—Field And Farm.

Dry Weather Corn.

Ever since Kansas started to grow corn there has been the perennial dread of drouth and hot winds. Corn that is black green one morning may be burned to a crisp before night.

This year is no exception, but Tony Smarsh, one of the most careful and scientific farmers in Sedgwick county, believes he has solved the problem, and an Eagle representative went with him yesterday afternoon to his farm five miles northwest of Wichita, near Maize to see the results.

There Mr. Smarsh has 320 acres of fine land. Seventy acres of this is in corn, and there are all five varieties, all imported from Texas on experiments extending over the past three years. He commenced by bringing a few kernels of corn from Wichita Falls, Texas, and little by little has repeated his trips to the Red river country, getting a half bushel here and there with the final result that right now, after the worst day on corn this season has yet

seen he has four acres of magnificent corn, every stalk of which bears a huge ear and one can stand in any one spot and reach at least ten ears, some measuring twenty eight to thirty inches in length when twenty-four inches is the record so far as known. One-half bushel of seed was used to seed these four acres.

All five of the varieties, both upland and in the bottom, have stood the drouth perfectly, no tassels having been burnt, while some fields are damaged where native seed was used. On the four acre tract he estimates ninety bushels to the acre. One man who has used this seed at Valley Center says his will yield 100 bushels to the acre.

The great claim for this "Red Wonder" corn is that it comes from 700 miles south of here and stands dry weather, as no other seed corn has ever done. Side by side two fields showed yesterday afternoon the difference. The old worn out native seed corn fields were burned to a crisp, but the huge stalks of the imported corn held enough moisture from the last rains that they stood tall and green with the tassels all right.

Mr. Smarsh has been a successful farmer in Kansas since 1879 and has no mercenary motive in exploiting this new seed. He simply wants to call attention of those farmers who have suffered from dry weather to the fact that a renewal of seed from the south will insure them against its effects and his replendent fields show it, the seventy acres including the five varieties, with four acres planted for the first time, show the difference. The fields just across the road, planted with native seed, are badly damaged. One interesting point is that the kernels of the corn used for seed are so large that it is necessary to drill extra holes in the planters of the drill used in order to let the seed go through.

A historic feature of interest about Mr. Smarsh's farm is that there are many buffalo wallows all about his place, which he has been obliged so fill up, and on ground where forty years ago he shot buffalo. Also he found in digging a trench evidences of a great battle some day, arrow heads of flint,

battle axes and cannon balls abounding in plenty. Mr. Smarsh was one of the first buyers of cattle and hogs for the Jacob Dold Packing Co.—Wichita Eagle

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